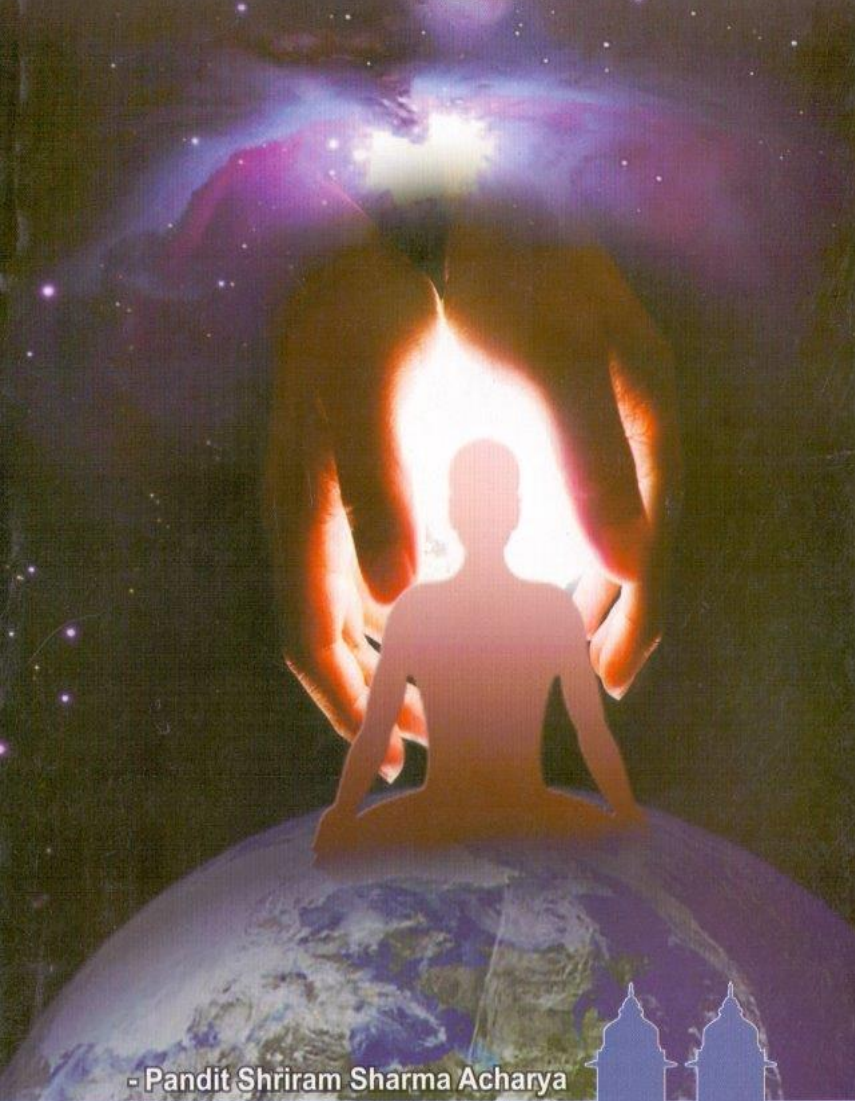


Support is needed for Self Evolution



- Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

INITIATION OF SELF-EVOLUTION



[Translation of "Atmik Pragati Ke Liye
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Contents

<i>Shraddha</i> – The moving force for self-evolution	05
Seek the help of a competent guide and become competent	12
<i>Ishtadev</i> – The Focus of Devotion	25
Significance of a noble <i>Guru</i> and a worthy disciple	33
The Concept and Sacrament of Initiation (<i>Deeksha</i>)	38

Preface

DESIRE to evolve further and make progress is deeply ingrained in human psyche. In present times this desire is almost completely oriented towards materialistic and worldly progress. Rarely such individuals can be found who look beyond and endeavor for progress of the inner selves by inculcating true spiritual disciplines. For a human being, progress of the inner-self is no less important than that of the materialistic fronts of life. This Self-Evolution leads to an extraordinary enhancement in human dignity and esteem. The revered personalities like Buddha, Christ, Gandhi Vivekananda tread on this path of self-evolution, and history testifies that they not only benefitted their own selves but also the entire mankind. Their endeavors led to the double advantage of enhancement and expansion of happiness for self as well as for others. On the other hand, the one tracked focus on only materialistic progress of great kings like Hiranyakashyap, Ravan, Kans, Duryodhan and Alexander led to their own downfall besides inflicting misery and sufferings on their countrymen. A balanced progress in both spiritual and worldly domains must presently be regarded as the best approach to life.

Evolution of the inner self is possible when an unflinching faith is developed in ideal human values like love, compassion, truth, morality etc. This is not easy because everyone around does not seem to bother about human ideals and the path seems deserted and lonely. Also, those who dare to tread the path seem to suffer miseries. So, stepping and then continuing on the path of self-evolution is impossible without love and guidance


of a master or a *Guru*. Those who desire to progress in spiritual domains must seek a competent master, one who has experience and who has excelled in this domain. An ideal *Guru* is one who possesses wisdom of a high level, strong character, and an unwavering spirit of philanthropy. An ideal *Guru* must have ample spiritual energy, accumulated by performing "*Tapasya*" (ascetic discipline and exercises). Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya, founder of All World Gayatri Pariwar, was one such great spiritual saint and master whose magical touch transformed lives of millions of people.

This book first discusses the importance of faith in spiritual domain, and how a loving relationship between a competent *Guru* and a worthy disciple leads to quick progress on the path of self-evolution. The book also describes two important concepts in spiritual domain. First, the process of initiation on the path of spiritual evolution through a ritual of *Guru Deeksha*. This is the practice in which a disciple takes an oath to tread on the path shown by his/her *Guru* and *Guru*, on his part transfers a portion of his spiritual energy to disciple to support his progress. Second, the choice of *Isht* or focus of devotion. This process helps a seeker to maintain focus on his chosen goal and develop *shraddha* which becomes the moving force and vitality for his/her quick progress.

It is hoped that this book will remove several misconceptions prevalent today about true ideals of spirituality, and will motivate readers to seek a master who can initiate them on this glorious path of self-evolution.

-- Dr. Pranav Pandya, MD
Chancellor, Dev Sanskriti University

SHRADDHA - THE MOVING FORCE FOR SELF-EVOLUTION

EVOUT faith and unflinching dedication, which is termed as *Shraddha* in Indian scriptures, is attributed supreme importance in the field of spirituality. Two disciples who pursue the same mode of spiritual discipline, practice the same *mantra* under the guidance of the same *Guru* (spiritual master) need not make similar spiritual progress. This is because the pace of success of one's endeavors in this field depends upon his sincerity and devotion towards the goal being pursued. The holy Gita also states – “*Shraddhāmaye Yam Purusah, Yo Yachhadrah Sa Eva Sah |*” (Meaning: What becomes of one depends upon his *shraddha*). Any spiritual endeavor (*sadhana*) devoid of *shraddha* is a mere ostentation or a ceremonial ritual. It is the strong bond of deep reverence of the disciple for his noble *Guru* and the angelic grace of the latter that lays the foundation of spiritual awakening of the disciple. The disciple's *shraddha* in the virtues of his *Guru*, and his strong zeal to attain the divine goal shown by his *Guru*, enable him to steadfastly adopt the arduous, ascetic disciplines of *sadhana* and

help him overcome the hardships and numerous tests on the way. Spiritual enlightenment becomes possible only when the devotee ardently continues his *sadhana* and deepens his *shraddha* so much that his false self-pride, his cravings, his passions, even his "self-identity" get submerged in it.

It is *shraddha* that induces 'life' or vitality in one's devotion. Consecration of lump of clay tied with a holy thread (*Kalava*) as lord Ganesh makes the lump as powerful as the deity Himself when the devotee's *shraddha* gets projected upon it. The profound faith of Meera that had compelled the Krishna to live in the stone-idol with her like a 'living deity', the profound faith of Eklavya that had made the mud statue of Dronacharya a much greater teacher than Dronacharya himself, and the profound faith of Ramakrishna Paramhans that had compelled the stone statue to accept his offerings like living Goddess Kali, are historic examples of the immense power of *shraddha*. This profound faith and reverence in divine virtues and in the pious nature of the soul is the key to spiritual enlightenment.

Training-Needs in Spiritual Domain:

One needs an ideal, a role model for inculcation of *shraddha*. It begins with one's respectful attraction for the majestic qualities of the master and deepens and expands as one experiences the virtuous character of the latter. The support of *shraddha* (in the Guru) is essential for spiritual ascent.

Right since birth a human being needs the (direct or indirect) guidance, training, and support of someone more capable. A guardian, especially the mother, is the first teacher who has to bear the responsibility of cultivating humane cultural values in the child. At later stages of life as well, in every field - e.g. science, sports, professional skills, or art, etc,

one requires adequate training for worthy progress. Thus, training and grooming in one form or the other continues to be a necessity for success on all fronts of life. The need of an adept guide (*Guru*) is similarly the most vital in the endeavors of self-awakening, refinement, and ascent.

The foremost requirement of initiating this journey of enlightenment and self-evolution is to stand against the pulls and pressures of the negative tendencies of one's own mind and downward trends of ignorance prevailing all around. The traits, concepts, aspirations, and activities of people usually revolve around sensual pleasures, procreation, gratification of selfish motives and false ego. In such an ambience dominating the society, the mediocre only emulate the prevailing trend and are carried away like leaves in a river or like pieces of dry grass in a hurricane.

An aspirant of self-evolution has to necessarily adopt an entirely different set of concepts and philosophy in life. He requires extraordinary strength to think differently than the popular, worldly thought-patterns, act differently and rise above the self-obsessed standards. The seeker receives such a strength and firm support only after being intimately associated with a noble master (*Guru*) who has lived high ideals in life and thereby developed competence to impart it to others. This association begins with *Guru-Deeksha* when the seeker pledges to dedicatedly follow the master's noble guidance and the latter accepts him/her as a disciple with blessings of courage and inspiration to follow the righteous path. *Guru-Deeksha* is not simply a ritual. Rather, it is the beginning of the disciple's self-awakening. It is completed with the disciple's total surrender to the *Guru* who is a live exemplar of high ideals and virtues. By sincerely following the *Guru*'s enlightened

guidance, the disciple's life also transforms towards high ideals and illuminates with divine glow. All this becomes possible only by the disciple's *shraddha* for the *Guru*. The inner-force awakened by the blessings of the noble *Guru* is intensified by the disciple's *shraddha*. This intense inner strength enables the disciple endeavor arduous *sadhana* progress as per the *Guru*'s beatifying teachings.

Selection of a *Guru*:

Is it necessary to thoroughly search for and prudently select a *Guru for self evolution*? Is it not possible to achieve the goal of life by just interacting with several competent persons? To seek an answer, it is worthwhile to look at the organized procedures and practices prescribed for those who are pursuing a Ph.D. degree or those who are specializing for Chartered Accountancy or those who are undergoing internship after completing basic course work in Law or Medicine. All these endeavors require a specific guide or a competent training system. Only after a clear choice of the topic and guide is made, the responsibilities get properly assigned; and then due to the procedural bindings, the quality and completeness of the specialized training process gets ensured.

If in a state of indecision one tries to acquire little bits of information from here and there, the effort does not serve any useful purpose. For this very reason, for expertise in any discipline, there has been an established tradition of prescribed course and consistently regulated thorough training along with a provision for interaction with the experts. As such there are no restrictions on augmentation of knowledge by studying more and more books and other erudite works on related subjects, but the aspirant of mastering a specific discipline needs to

follow the specific norms and prescribed courses with unperturbed focus under the expert advice of the chosen guide.

Similar regulations are applicable in the field of spirituality. Spirituality is the science of inner-awakening, chiseled refinement of personality, and enlightenment and evolution of the real self. Spiritual ascent leads to holistic development of personality and attaining fulfillment. Spiritual development is therefore more important than single-tracked materialistic advancement. In view of the invaluable and beatifying outcomes that are attained through spiritual progress, the guidance of an adept Guru must be regarded as absolutely necessary.

Glory of Guru-element:

Ancient Indian Culture regards mother, father, and *Guru* as reflections of the trinity Gods in human forms. The mother is endowed with the power of creation of god *Brahma*. God Vishnu governs the nurturing, protection and growth of the entire creation and all living beings. In human life, father is primarily assigned this responsibility of sustenance and healthy growth of the family. God Shiva is the maintainer and enforcer of discipline in all visible and invisible systems of cosmos. Able *Guru* plays this role to preserve the dignity of human life.

The status of the *Guru* is in fact much higher than either of the parents, since whereas parents take care of creation and preservation of physical body only, the *Guru* provides the being a second birth in this very life by enabling chiseled refinement of the disciple's personality, and his/her cultural excellence, intellectual, mental and emotional elevation and illumination, and inner awakening. The latter process is known as *Dwijatva*

(second birth). *Dwijatva* is a process of inculcation of high level of virtues in the disciple and is initiated through the sacrament of *Yagyopaveet Deeksha* through which the disciple takes a pledge to follow the direction of the *Guru* for evolution of self while wearing the sacred thread (*yagyopaveet*) as a symbol of this pledge.

It is thus quite obvious that the status of a spiritual master (*Guru*) is supreme in human life. It is the *Guru* who provides a disciple the opportunity to evolve into an angelic being from the lowly status of a 'humanoid animal' (human being having animal traits only). Since the spiritually evolved power of the *Guru* is capable of transforming, protecting, and elevating the life of the disciple in the same physical body and leading it to the path of ultimate welfare and soul-evolution, the *Guru* may be viewed as a personification of the trinity gods. The traditional prayers in the Vedic texts indeed glorify this majestic status of *Guru*.

Close interaction and support of a *Guru* had helped many individuals of ordinary caliber to become extraordinarily competent and exemplars for the world. By the grace of Buddha many like King Harshvardhan, King Ashok, Anand and Kumarjeeva reached the pinnacles of humane dignity. Lowly people such as Angulimal (a dacoit) and Amrapali (a courtesan) could get an opportunity to transform their petty personalities into those of shining stars of human-welfare by dedicating their lives to Buddha as *Guru*. Had there not been a close spiritual interaction between Samarth Guru Ramdas and Shivaji, Ramkrishna Paramhans and Vivekanand, Chanakya and Chandragupta, Virjanand and Dayanand, none of them in these *Guru* and disciple pairs would have been able to create glorious feats of history.

In the more recent times, may of us have witnessed the influence of Mahatma Gandhi on Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Rajgopalachari, Vinoba Bhave, etc., in the absence of which these great men would have lived and died like ordinary mortal beings. Without them Gandhi ji too would not have achieved what he could. If Gandhi ji had remained engaged in spiritual pursuits through arduous *sadhanas* in solitude like Bhageerath and Dadhichi, he would have surely reached divine realms. But then numerous patriots of India's freedom struggle would have remained deprived of the benefit of his influence. History of great achievements of mankind is full of several examples which illustrate that intense association of a great *Guru* and a worthy disciple not only dignifies both, but also benefits the society.

It is indeed the 'magic' of the interactive company, guidance and support of excellence that works like human alchemy and transforms ordinary (human) beings into great, glorifying personalities. This is why dedicated association with a virtuous *Guru*, and following the disciplines and noble path guided by him/her is so important. *Shraddha* of the disciple is the life-force of this interaction. If the seekers of self-evolution grasp this fact and proceed accordingly, their journey would surely advance briskly along the 'highway' of spiritual progress.

SEEK THE HELP OF A COMPETENT GUIDE AND BECOME COMPETENT



EER-SAGE Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya, founder of All World Gayatri Pariwar had pioneered renaissance of

spirituality in the modern age. He was a preeminent thinker whose monumental writings provide instant guidance, courage, and practical solutions to resolve all problems faced by mankind today. His thoughts and deeds give positive direction towards a brighter future for all. His contributions as a patriot and altruistic social reformer also are enormous. He used to modestly render the credit of his extraordinary powers and angelic talents to the grace of his divine Guru. He focused his entire *shraddha* on his *Guru*, making an absolute surrender of his life and soul to follow the noble path guided by the latter. Consequently, he (Acharya ji) began to receive invigorating showers of unlimited generous benefactions from the Almighty. According to him, had the degree of his dedication, or his *shraddha* for his *Guru* been lesser, he would have achieved nothing, quite like the multitude of casual worshippers who remain engaged only in customary rituals of religious practices.

The delegation of powers by senior members in any organization is regulated on the basis of the competence of the juniors. Similar is true in the case of beatifying benefits of the Guru's blessings. Ramkrishna Paramhans had a large number of devotees. Though all of them had blessings from him, there were only a handful of *sadhaks* like Vivekanand, Brahmanand, Premanand and Shardanand, who were magnanimously rewarded by him. For this differential treatment, however, Ramkrishna should not be accused of partiality. The quantity of rain-water accumulating in a reservoir depends on the latter's capacity. Not a drop of water from even torrential rains is retained on a high peaked mound or on bare rocks.

In the field of spirituality the significance of degree of *shraddha* of disciple is rated higher than the competence of a deity or *Siddha Purush* (the Guru having paranormal capabilities). Though Dronacharya used to teach in person the finest techniques of archery in their own palace, the "Kauravas" could not derive that much of benefit, as Eklavya could by virtue of deep *shraddha* in him despite having no contact with him. So marvelous is the power of *shraddha* that the entire structure of self-evolution is erected on this one element of intrinsic faith and devotion. The fructification of a *Mantra* also depends only on this single factor.

Shraddha constitutes the bridge between the deity and the worshipper. It is the medium through which divinity is incorporated in the life of the *sadhak* making the latter a dignified human being. By building up a high level of *shraddha* one opens up the highway to the glorious faculties (*vibhuti*) of spirituality. In the absence of *shraddha* a *Mantra* is reduced to a jabber and the deity to an inert or imaginary object. After having found a *Guru*, one takes the first step in

the direction of spiritual progress by nurturing *shraddha* towards him.

Guru should be Worthy of Reverence:

Spiritual texts sing great paeans in glory of the astonishing power of *shraddha* towards the *Guru*. Some texts equate *Guru* with the trinity gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh and at some places even regard him as superior to God. In the modern times as well, most people respect these texts. Then why is there no enthusiasm amongst the masses for seeking a *Guru*? The reason seems to be only one: now-a-days one rarely comes across such a spiritually elevated person who can be trusted as worthy of being accepted as *Guru*.

How can one expect a person to help the disciples and others who himself has not followed a spiritually disciplined life of devout austerity; who has not painstakingly accumulated vast knowledge by studying, grasping and adopting fundamentals of spiritual science; who has not been able to muster courage for selfless service and welfare of mankind and surrendering life for noble values? Unless one stands high on such moral grounds and ideals of spirituality in conduct, he would only be a fake guru. Alliance between a self-styled *Guru* desirous of fleecing and a cunning disciple looking for easy gains is like a delusive trade; it maligns the glory of the great tradition. In such an environment, where would be the scope for self-refinement? How would one have *shraddha* for these types of false *Gurus* and what could be the basis and conviction for developing a close interaction between such *Gurus* and their disciples? There is a saying, "*lobhi guru lalchi chela, dono naruk mein thelum thela*", i.e. the unholy alliance between a covetous *Guru* and a greedy disciple carries both to hell.

Now-a-days the relationship between *Guru* and disciple is being dominated by elements of incompetence and distrust. The so-called *Gurus* are least concerned about the spiritual development of the self-proclaimed disciples whereas, the latter hardly feel any need to behave in accordance with the prescribed discipline and directives of the *Guru*. This is the reason for the fast disappearance of the glorious tradition of *Guru* and disciple. In some cases, traditional rituals are being blindly followed but in the absence of the real spirit these do not bear any fruits. As a consequence, neither the *Guru* acquires respectability nor there is any improvement in the ethical values and conduct of the disciple. Competence of the *Guru* and *shraddha* of the disciple are vital for success in the field of spirituality. A combination of these two attributes creates an ambience fragrant with virtuous traits in the society. Today the *mantras* and deities have become ineffective, as the eternal tree of spiritual progress is slowly drying up; it is losing its vitality in the absence of essential nurturing that is supposed to be provided by healthy tradition of *Guru*-disciple relationship.

Invaluable Contributions of the *Guru*:

Once the significance of the science of self-evolution has been understood and the path of progress is pursued it becomes necessary to seek ways and means for continuance of *Shraddha-Vishwas* (unperturbed faith, devotion and conviction) and their progressive expansion. If one does not have a *Guru* to guide him on the path of spirituality, he would remain doubtful about the appropriateness of the practices being followed. The field of research in the disciplines of spiritual sciences is vast. There are wide contradictions amongst the specialists about the systems

to be followed. The treatises on spirituality also propose divergent views. As one tries to probe deeper and deeper in the subject, the confusion gets further compounded. Discrimination between the authentic and spurious becomes difficult and considerations based on logic too are hardly helpful. Under these circumstances, one's faith falls a victim to indecision and this uncertainty continues forever. In the absence of adept guidance, one keeps on drifting aimlessly like a rudderless ship in stormy currents, keeps running after ever-new systems and practices, abandoning the older ones. In the process one gains nothing but exhaustion and frustration. Only those find it possible to come out of this labyrinth, who after identifying an adept system, follow it perseveringly with unwavering faith and enthusiasm. This task, quite obviously, cannot be accomplished without the help of a *Guru*.

An alert and prepared mind can learn useful lessons from the good dwelling anywhere in Nature. It is well known, that Dattatreya had sought inspirations from twenty-four 'teachers', which included even tiny animals. However, in ordinary case, and especially for spiritual ascent one needs to find an adept guide. Till an aspirant of spiritual progress succeeds in the endeavor of seeking a noble *Guru* (*Sadguru*), he/she may get guidance from the books and works of noble personalities like Acharya Shriram Sharma. The latter was a seer-sage and social reformer this Age who pioneered renaissance of scientific spirituality and initiated the *Pragya Abhiyan* of awakening divine sensitivity and wisdom of mankind through Thought-Revolution. Any one looking for help in the present critical times of the juncture of two eras is most welcome to join the large family like socio-spiritual organization founded by him as "Gayatri Pariwar"

Can there be more than one *Guru*?

Some misconceptions are prevalent in the society about seeking guidance from more than one *Guru*. It may be noted in this context that in the process of higher learning, having mastered one level of specialty under an expert, one may need to take guidance from another expert in different specialty if the former guide does not have adequate expertise in it. Ample examples of this sort exits in the field of spiritual progress as well.

God incarnate Ram is known to have had two *Gurus*. Initially, *rishi* Vashistha, was his family *Guru*. He had taught him *Yog-Vashistha*. However, on the pretext of seeking protection of *Yagya*, the second *Guru* *rishi* Vishwamitra had taken Ram and Lakshman to his hermitage and made them adept in the specialties of the science of *Bala* and *Atibala*. What was taught by Vishwamitra, was not the expertise of Vashistha. Mastering the science of *Bala* and *Atibala* corresponds to attaining the capability of invoking and using the twin primordial powers of the Omnipotent, namely, *Savitri* and *Gayatri* – the former governing the perceivable manifestation of Nature, and the latter being the eternal super-consciousness force, the presiding power of the extra-sensory and transcendental world and the evolutionary inspiration behind genesis of Nature and the entire creation. Having acquired mastery in the science of *Bala* and *Atibala*, the princes used the first one to defeat the demonic forces (*Asurs*). They used the second one for the more difficult task of establishing *Ram Rajya* – moral order and all-round peace, progress and happiness in the society.

Acharya Shriram Sharma was initiated in *Gayatri Mantra* and his "*Yagyopavit Samskar*" (thread ceremony) was

conducted by Mahamana Madanmohan Malviya. Later, because of his divine *sanskaras* and *sadhanas* accomplished in the previous lives, a divine incarnate Himalayan yogi in sublime form appeared before him and reminded him of being his *Guru* in the earlier lives. This angelic *sadguru* instructed Acharya ji to continue with the task of *Yug Nirman* (creating a new era) as per the will of God. Since then all the activities of the grand mission of *Yug Nirman* were planned and implemented by Acharya ji as per the sublime guidance of this angelic *sadguru*.

Guru Renders Support for Disciple's Evolution:

As mentioned earlier, by associating with a competent entity, anyone can rise above mediocre status and become an extraordinary person. After getting interlinked with a powerhouse, the electrical appliances begin to work. A tap attached to a water-tank continues to work till the latter becomes empty. The moon derives its brilliance from the Sun. Rivers connected with the Himalayas never dry up. By virtue of being a part of the Police Force, even the low-ranked policeman has some authority and he feels proud of that power and position. In a nutshell, in order to be effective one has to establish a link with an appropriate source of power. After associating with a competent source even a weakling becomes strong. By merging in the Ganges, the waters of all dirty drains and rivulets become a part of the holy river and are considered pure and pious. A creeper, which is incapable of attaining any height on its own, climbs higher and higher with the support of a tree. The daughter of poor and uneducated parents begins to command respect, honor and prosperity upon marrying a man of reputed status.

Generally such analogies are given when a loving relationship gets established between God and a human. But these analogies also hold true to a great extent when an intimate relationship between competence of *Guru* and *shraddha* of his disciple begins to grow. According to Indian Mythology, all the deities acquired their divine qualities under the guidance of their *Guru* Brahaspati, whereas the Asuras or demons acquired their paranormal physical powers under the tutelage of their own *Guru* Shukracharya. Either of these could not have acquired their powers on their own. Guidance and transference of powers by a *Guru*, and devout faith and sincere efforts by a disciple, whenever these have come together magical results have been obtained.

Guru's importance in Indian Tradition:

In the present times, nobility of family lineage is held in high regard. In ancient times lineage of a great *Guru* also commanded equal respect. In fact, even today, families are identified by a clan name called '*gotra*' which is kept not only on the name of an illustrious ancestor but also on the basis of a *Guru's* lineage. *Gotra names* based on the names of highly revered *Rishis* are found in every caste and creed of India. May be these *Rishis* were the ancestors of these families. But, as in ancient India, every one used to follow the guidance of some *rishi*, it is more likely that these *rishis* may have been the *gurus* of the ancestors of the families and the name of the illustrious *Guru* was adopted as the *gotra* name.

Guru has always been given more importance than both the parents taken together. There is a simple reason for this. The contributions of a *Guru* in bringing forth the hidden talents of an individual for the evolution of inner-self is in no way any less

than the contributions of parents in providing for resources for physical growth. The task undertaken by a *Guru* is more arduous than that of the trainers of wild animals in a circus to make the latter perform wonderful feats.

Competence required for *Guru-Deeksha*:

In principle, *Guru-Deeksha* is a process in which the master (Guru) blesses the disciple with sublime vital spiritual power. Proximity of fire gives warmth. Entering cold basements or cold storages gives one shivers. Grass that grows underneath a sandalwood tree becomes fragrant. With the drops of water in Swati *nakshatra*, oysters begin to create pearls within. Such indeed is the profound influence of the nearness to a competent entity. This influence has been metaphorically described as *Paras* (the stone that turns iron into gold), *Kalpavriksha* (a tree beneath which all wishes are fulfilled) and *Amrit* (Nectar that gives eternity). When one reaches near these and assimilates this influence, a complete transformation takes place. These examples also hold true to the process of proximity, intimacy, assimilation and transference that takes place between an able master and his disciple.

The currents of *pran* (Bio-Energy) flow in each human body. But in great beings, this bio-energy manifests in a much greater strength. In spiritually elevated persons, it is possible to sense the field of this energy as their aura (halo around the face and the entire body). Their spiritually vitalized *pran* creates a special energy-field around them. When proximity and intimacy is established, their bio-energy begins to naturally flow towards those who have lower quantities of the same. This process of transfer of energy is extrasensory and affects all animate and inanimate objects in the vicinity. It is well known that around

the hermitages of *Rishis*, carnivores and herbivores lived in perfect peaceful coexistence in spite of their intrinsic characteristics of animosity. The *pranic* energy-field of the *Rishis* in the surroundings made these animals behave almost opposite to their natural characteristics. The same process of 'positive transformation' begins with the *Deeksha* (initiation) of a disciple by a *Guru*.

Only great beings with evolved *pran* have the right to give *deeksha*. After all, only one who has, can donate to others. One who is empty-handed and lives on alms cannot be expected to give anything to others. It is difficult to find deserving *gurus* who deserve to give *deeksha*. If there is no seriousness, then any one can pretend to be a *guru* and any one else a disciple, but what is truly expected from this process cannot be achieved in the absence of competence and genuineness. So scriptures have emphasized that there is a dire need to first seriously evaluate the capability of a *guru*, and faith and dedication of the disciple. Without these, merely following rituals would not lead anywhere. On the other hand, if the regulations laid out are earnestly followed in right direction, extraordinary benefits are guaranteed.

Seek Guru for *Sadhana*:

Scriptures have strongly denounced those who do not have a competent *Guru*. It has been said that their prayers and oblations (*tarpan*) do not reach their deceased forefathers. Pilgrimage undertaken by them too do not bear any fruits. Scriptures have even forbidden partaking food with those who have no *Guru*. Though such statements seem exaggerated, highly emotional and metaphorical, but they carry a strong motivation for seeking a *Guru*.

If mother's name is not known, a person gets regarded as illegitimate and doubts are expressed about the circumstances that led to his birth. If father's name is not known, then the mother is accused of having loose morals, and the child is considered unlawful. Cultural ancestry of a person is given equal importance. Similarly, it is considered a deficiency when sincere efforts have not been put-in to seek a spiritual guru for personal refinement. A person's introduction remains incomplete in the absence of a reference to a *Guru-dwara* (hermitage of *Guru*). Scriptures have encouraged each and every person to remove this deficiency and have pointed out advantages of this alliance and also indicate the harm likely to be afflicted if one refrains from the process. In ancient times being addressed as "*nigura*" (One not having a *Guru*) was considered derogatory. Thus scriptures are unanimous in their opinion that following a competent, great personality as *Guru* is an absolute necessity that must be fulfilled.

Deeksha (initiation by a *Guru*) and *Yagyopaveet* (consecrated thread wore across the shoulders) are interrelated. *Yagyopaveet* ceremony symbolically represents *Dwijatva* i.e. the second birth of the being. All mothers give birth to a being that is more animal than human, who comes in this world with understanding of only physical needs and with basic instincts. The process of instilling divine cultural values and spiritual development is initiated only by a *Guru*. A mine produces ores that are unrefined, raw materials comprising of a mixture of metals and minerals. Unless heated in the blast furnace, and thoroughly refined, the crude ore would remain useless. The same analogy is applicable to a human being. Most parents and guardians only make one competent to look after his worldly needs. For refined development of talents and creativity, and

for ethical evolution and it is necessary to seek by all means, the shelter and guidance of a great person who is highly accomplished on virtuous grounds.

The purpose of imparting education and talents is normally served by *Gurukul* (hermitage) where the disciple learns the art and science of happy and purposeful living under the direct supervision of a *Guru*. When this is not feasible, the interaction between the *Guru* and the disciple has to be carried out through distant communication and occasional personal interactions. In this way, despite physical separation, it is possible to maintain connectivity between *Guru* and disciple. Upon completing education at their respective *Gurukuls* Ram and Krishna had maintained a similar connection with their *Gurus* Vishvamitra and Sandeepani later on after moving elsewhere.

Spiritual literature is replete with discussions on attainment of supernatural powers through *sadhana* (ascetic disciplines and spiritual practices of self-refinement). There are several treatises that discuss the importance of *sadhana* and its various techniques in detail. However, it has been repeatedly emphasized that none would be able to succeed and none should ever attempt any such devout spiritual endeavor on one's own. A basic pre-requisite for *sadhana* is the assessment of one's own spiritual status by an adept *Guru*, who only can take a decision on the type of *sadhana* one must undertake. Medical books contain detailed description of prognosis and treatments of various diseases. Similarly, medical stores sell all kinds of medicines. But even then, the importance of consultation and instructions of an experienced medical doctor cannot be denied. If a patient begins to take his own decisions on prognosis and treatment of diseases, then there would be every possibility of mistakes and harm. The same analogy is applicable to *sadhana*.

It is not appropriate to start practicing whatever that appeals. One cannot evaluate the state of one's own inner being oneself.

Even to look at one's own eyes, one needs the help of a mirror. How can one then, analyze and assess one's own state of health? And without proper assessment, how can the correct treatment be carried out? There is no other option than going to a competent doctor and taking benefit of his keen perception and experience. Similarly, those desirous of taking up *sadhanas* need consultation, protection, support and benevolence of some chosen competent *Guru* as a guide. Until such a *Guru* is found, the successful culmination of *sadhana* continues to be illusory. The adage "*Jo Sadguru so deeksha pave, so sadhan ko saphal banave*" meaning 'supervision by a true *Guru* brings one success in *sadhana*', therefore, presents the true spirit of the process of self-development with the noble guidance and support of a virtuous master.

For a new entrant to the field of self-evolution there are numerous factors that necessitate seeking and getting initiated by a truly competent *Guru*. The wise are well aware of this need and make every endeavor to fulfill it.

ISHTADEV - THE FOCUS OF DEVOTION



JUST as for making progress in the material world physical efforts are needed, for evolution of the inner-self the level of consciousness (*Chetna*) needs to be increased and the hidden talents and inner brilliance need to be chiseled. In general, there are two basic urges that prompt a living being to act. One is hunger, which necessitates the activities for acquiring food. The other is sexual urge, which arises as the body matures and which motivates one to search for a partner and set up a family. The existence and endeavors of entire animal kingdom is sustained by these two strong motivating factors. The soul of the being, on the other hand, follows an entirely difference course. Research in spirituality in ancient India has established that parallel to the physical evolution of the species, the soul too follows a path of progressive evolution and after passing through several millions of life-forms, finally appears in the form of human being. During the course of this association with various living forms, the soul acquires and accumulates many base instincts and traits from its earlier forms and these get carried over to the human form.

When a child grows up, smaller clothes don't fit. Similarly as the soul evolves it feels discomfiture in the older envelopes of baseness. For worthiness of human life, the inner-self (*antahkaran*) needs to be adorned with benevolent, ethical values, and the physical body with virtuous traits. This, however, is a very difficult task because of two reasons. One, the basal tendencies acquired from earlier life-forms are too deep-rooted and second, the change does not appear convenient in the prevailing social environment. The evolution of soul, therefore, does require a very determined endeavor, the process of which is called *sadhana*.

The first step on way to *sadhana* is taking a decision on choice of the deity (*Ishtadev*). *Ishta* means goal. Chosen deity is none other than a symbolical representation of attributes of the God that a (true) devotee would seek. Desire to progress is an intrinsic, natural tendency but there is a need to channelize it and give it a definite form. Human motives and desires are innumerable and very varied. Like giant waves of sea, one desire gives rise to another and the process continues *ad infinitum*. If there is no definite direction to the flow of desires, efforts remain disorganized and no definite goal would be attained. With no clear destination in mind, aimless wandering results merely in exhaustion and desperation. Like the proverbial musk deer, man keeps running helter skelter in search of lasting happiness, the source of which lies actually within his own self.

Human soul has a natural tendency to seek progress. Normally, this trait manifests itself as lofty ambitions. In the absence of a clearly defined goal and form, this transcendent tendency gets driven by the extrovert tendencies of mind and gets diverted to fulfillment of false-pride and physical appeasements and then the object of life itself gets

misconstrued to merely satiation of desires (*Vasna*), greed (*Trishna*) and fulfillment of ego (*Ahanta*). Though fulfillment of these desires does provide some degree of happiness and comfort, this is not in the least helpful in the process of evolution of the soul. When the high ambitions are not guided by ethical values, they misguide man to attain prosperity even through improper means, and so, become the root cause for moral decadence and misery instead of bringing in happiness.

Importance of having *Ishtadev*:

A spiritual seeker always has a *Ishta-Dev* — a deity or source of divinity which is the focus of his/her devotion; the procedures and methods of his or her *sadhana* are defined according to this *Ishta-Dev*. Though the end goal of all spiritual endeavors is —attaining a divine, enlightened life, and ultimate soul-evolution, the psychological background for all the efforts towards that goal is created based upon the process of worship. The ultimate transformation that leads to creation of divine life, truly lies in the attainment of absolute purity in thought and behavior. This alone is the state known as attainment of heaven “*swarga*” or absolute freedom (*mukti*), salvation, etc in parlance of spirituality. This itself is known as self-realization (*atma-sakshatkar*) or communion with God (*Ishwar-darshan*). The endeavors required to achieve this goal constitute the various disciplines of *sadhana*. Commencement of *sadhana* requires both - strong motivation to attain the goal and the knowledge of its procedures and methods. Righteous progress of *sadhana* begins to reflect in refined transmutation of the *sadhaka*, which everyone who interacts with him/her can see.

Before setting foot on the course of the inner progress one must have a clear idea of the final destination. This is similar to the way large engineering projects are executed. The architects

first prepare appropriate blueprints and models for the project. For selecting ways and means for evolution of the inner-self a variety of spiritual disciplines have been prescribed and adopted. There has been a tradition of choosing Hanuman as *Ishtdev* for invoking devotion, strength, fearlessness; choosing Ram as *Ishta* for attaining discipline in thought and human excellence; Krishna for attaining holistic completeness, Savita (the rising Sun) for attaining the brilliance of Omnipresent Almighty. By choosing an *Ishtdev*, not only do the human endeavors get a definitive direction, but also, several related extrasensory power-centers lying dormant within the body begin to get activated. Simultaneously, the *sadhaka* (the seeker, the devotee, thid disciple who endeavors a *sadhana*) begins to receive as blessings related powers from the transcendental store-house of cosmic energy of the Omnipresent God.

Every success story begins with aspirations to attain success. Aspirations create necessities. Necessities give rise to motivation for efforts. A combination of righteous efforts and motivation generates a tremendous 'magnetic field'. It works in three ways. First, it changes one's outlook towards normal routine activities and it makes these activities consonant with the desired goal. Second, it activates the dormant capabilities of a person and provides inner strength for progress. Third, it attracts divine grace. These three components together constitute the trinity, assuring success in the venture.

By deciding on the *Isht* to be invoked, one is able to identify the right path to success. The grace of the supreme being descends on man in the form of 'excellence'. Excitement and enthusiasm to perform great deeds fill his thoughts and emotions, and his activities begin along the same lines in right earnest. The true worship (*upasana*) of the Supreme Being is nothing but veneration of excellence. The exclusive goal of

worshipping God, who is an ensemble of absolute virtues, is to seek excellence in life.

A Universal Choice:

There is so much confusion in choosing an *Isht* today because of multitude of alternatives in the choice for the same. In ancient times the situation was different. Spiritual masters had arrived at a consensus and had suggested all worshippers to follow their directive. Indian culture, which in fact must be called the culture for the whole world, had arrived at one conclusion that, for *sadhana* that is aimed to attain inner progress, *Gayatri* only must be adopted as *Ishta-Dev*.

It has been a tradition to accept Gayatri as Ishta-Dev since times immemorial. Puranas (ancient Indian scriptures written in narrative style) say that in the early stages of the creation of this world, Brahma, the Creator, received sublime inspirations, and worshipped *Gayatri* to acquire the competence for creating this cosmos. It is said that the trinity gods governing this world (Brahma, the creator, Vishnu - the sustainer, and Shiva - the discipliner) have also worshipped *Gayatri* as *Isht*. Brahaspati, the *Guru* of celestial deities of Nature had propagated the *Dakshin Margi sadhana* disciplines and Shukracharya, the *Guru* of mighty giants had propagated the *Vam Margi sadhana* disciplines. These were nothing else but respectively, the spiritual and material aspects of *Gayatri* only.

The preeminent sagacity and miraculous spiritual excellence of the revered seven sages of Vedic times (the *sapt-rishis*) represent the seven components of the *Gayatri Mantra*. Incarnations of divinity like Ram and Krishna too had *Gayatri* as their *Isht*. The four *Vedas*, *Puranas* and other scriptures are regarded as explanatory treatises of the great *Gayatri Mantra*.

The twenty-four *Gurus* of Dattatreya, were these very twenty-four letters of *Gayatri Mantra*. In the same way the twenty-four types of *Yog* and *Tap* (ascetic disciplines) are also extensions of the philosophy and disciplines of *Gayatri Sadhana*. *Gayatri* is *Guru Mantra* and is used as a medium to establish a spiritual link between the *Guru* and the disciple. There are two insignia of ancient Indian religion. These are *shikha* (the tuft of hair maintained in the central part of the cranium) and *sootra* (or *Yagyopavaeet*, the sacred of threads worn across the shoulder). Both are symbols of *Gayatri*. *Shikha* on the head symbolizes the ideology of *Gayatri* and *Sootra* on the body, its translation into noble deeds. Traditionally, *Sandhya* is regarded as the basic form of worship in Hindu religion. Chanting of the *Gayatri Mantra* with deep meditation is an essential constituent of *sandhya*. The foregoing facts clearly show that *Gayatri* is the basis of the eternal religious and spiritual traditions. So, it is regarded universal to adopt this as *ishta-dev*.

In terms of philosophy, *Gayatri* stands for *Ritambhara Pragya*. 'Ritambhara' means - *shraddha* (absolute faith in divine virtues) associated with discretionary wisdom. By *Pragya* is meant pure wisdom that leads to true fulfilment. So *Gayatri* stands for comprehensive, all encompassing wisdom. *Gayatri* is, in fact the seed from which has born the vast framework (tree) of *Brahm Vidya* (science of spirituality). This is the philosophical or theoretical framework of *Gayatri*. For practice, its concepts are translated into various types of yogic and ascetic (*Tap*) exercises and religious rituals. The prescription of *Gayatri* as *Isht*, as goal, as deity has in fact, been given by the spiritual masters after in-depth study and self-experience of long-term dedicated *sadhanas*, and is based upon realizations attained from its continuous sustained

practice. Even today its importance and utility is as undeniable as in ancient times.

The *sadhana* of *Gayatri* is universal and for everyone. It cannot be confined to any particular religion, caste or sect. This is very similar to Indian culture, which has got this name only because it was conceived in India. But none of its practices and processes can be said to be applicable only to people residing in this region of the world. *Gayatri* is the soul of Indian Culture. But it is efficacious for all human beings irrespective of their country or religion. The culture of India is in fact a culture of divine values and should be considered as a culture of humanity.

Invocation of *Ritambhara Pragya* as *Isht* must be considered as a great achievement of one's life. This itself has been called *Atma-Gyan* (Self-Realization), *Brahm-Gyan* (God-realization) in parlance of spirituality. It stands for farsighted discretionary wisdom and prudence. Justice and propriety are its fruits. The wise know that all circumstances are only created by one's state of mind. All undesirable circumstances are created by the wrongful state of the mind. Changes in the way of thinking within produce miraculous transformations in the outside environment. Poverty, adversity, distress and conflicts are (direct or indirect) consequences of decadence of inner-self which leads to distorted thinking and inappropriate actions. Only idealistic activities motivated by high level of thinking can bring a man inner satisfaction and present him the riches like abundant support of friends, public cooperation, and even divine grace. An in-depth study has revealed that the single factor that created *Satyug* (Golden Era) was nothing, but the high level of thinking and character of the people in that Age. In other words, we can say that the environment that prevailed

then was the fruit of adoption of *Ritambhara*. By the grace of *Ritambhara Pragya* only could India, and through it the entire mankind inhabiting, the whole world, could lead a heavenly life.

Invoking and adopting *Pragya* as *Isht* would bless one with all those beatitudes and benefits that have been described in the scriptures on *Gayatri*. The maxims like "*Nahi Gyanen Saddrishyam Pavitraimih Vidyate*", "*Atma Vaare Gyatavyaha Shrotavyaha Mantavyaha Nididhyasitavyaha*", etc, point towards the importance of attaining soul-knowledge, and this ultimate knowledge is nothing but *Gayatri*, the primordial wisdom. It has brought fame, reverence, beatifying fulfillment and absolute salvation to many seekers of self-realization since time immemorial. We must adopt the *upasana* and *sadhana* of *Gayatri* in our lives.

Symbolically, the idol of *Gayatri* has been shown having a white swan as her means of conveyance. This swan is not an ordinary bird but the *Rajhans* as described in scriptures, which has discriminating farsighted wisdom, *Pragya*. This *Rajhans* has the competence to partake milk (propriety) and leave the water (impropriety) from a mixture of the two. For its food it feeds on pearls (virtues) and rejects the worms (vices). This metaphorical expression indicates the attitude and the state of the mind a seeker of self-realization is required to develop. *Gayatri* and *Pragya* are interrelated. By the grace of *Gayatri* the *sadhak* is endowed with discretionary farsighted wisdom known as *Pragya*. Thus for *Isht*, *Gayatri* is the proper and exclusive choice. Once this decision is made the process of self-evolution (by devout *Gayatri Sadhana*) becomes certain and progresses at a brisk pace. With this choice, there does not remain an iota of doubt about the rule that *sadhana* leads to attainment of great power and success.

SIGNIFICANCE OF A COMPETENT GURU AND A WORTHY DISCIPLE



FOR a fruitful relationship in the domain of spirituality, credibility and worthiness of the receiver are as important factors as the authenticity and spiritual competence of the giver. Even after a heavy downpour, not a drop of water gets retained on rocky hilltops, and on a rock not a leaf can grow. The quantity of water accumulating in a tank depends on its depth and size. Rivers tend to flow towards the sea, which has the capacity to contain their water.

If one is blind, he cannot see even in the bright mid-day sunlight. If one is deaf, he cannot enjoy blissful music. Likewise, when one's mind is saturated with preconceived notions, he cannot benefit from the best of advice or company of wise men. A meritorious worthy disciple having absolute faith and confidence can perform miracles like Eklavya who became an expert archer by practicing before a mud statute of his *Guru* Dronacharya, and Meera who transformed her stone idol of Krishna into a living God. It was only due to the merit and worthiness of the disciples that the able *Guru* Samarth Ramdas

could create Shivaji; similar historic examples of great Gurus and their distinguished disciples are — Chanakya and Chandragupta, Ramkrishana Paramhans and Vivekanand, and Virjanand and Dayanand.

Though dignity and grace of *Guru* is very important, *shraddha* and devotional depth of the disciple's emotions has an even greater importance. Devoid of these basic qualities, there are a large number of self-proclaimed disciples, who try to trick accomplished masters to gain from them their boons and powers, but finally attain nothing. Spiritually accomplished beings have the capacity to peep into the mind of others. It is not possible to deceive them by any disguise of appearance or behavior. *Siddha Purushas* (accomplished mystics), *rishis* and divine beings do not get influenced by external appearances or worldly statuses of anybody. Only piety of the inner-selves of the disciples makes them confer some worthwhile blessings on them. Meeting in person, paying obeisance, turning beads of rosary, or flattery never help in attaining benefits which can become available by virtue of merit and worthiness, and faithfully fulfilling the assignments given by *Guru*.

Prior to giving consent for marriage of their daughter, parents thoroughly examine the qualifications of the would-be bridegroom. They try to ensure his worthiness and compatibility with their beloved daughter. Who would like to give a daughter in marriage to a person of narrow selfish temperament? For masters who have attained spiritual powers after arduous endeavours, these are dearer than a darling daughter. Seeking these powers requires much more than an humble request. It requires demonstration of one's merit and a credible assurance for proper utilization of these powers as desired by the master.

Who Deserves *Guru's* Grace?

Great *Gurus* hand over a part of their extra-sensory, paranormal powers only to help attain some high goals. No sagacious person would distribute his precious, hard earned wealth to fulfill someone's narrow selfish interests or to satisfy someone's greed, attachment and ego. Nor is it ethical to think of depriving someone of his hard earned wealth in this manner. Highly placed government officials are given many extraordinary powers and access to higher resources for the welfare of people. These have to be used in accordance with the law, administrative disciplines and entrusted responsibility. The defaulters who misuse them for personal benefits face the penalizing consequences of legal proceedings.

Great persons earn the title and honor of being a *Guru* only after dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to promotion of ideals. So, they bestow a part of their valuable assets to only those deserving disciples who are also dedicated to the same ideology. Besides, they also examine the receiver for his credibility and honesty. An undeserving disciple who is unable to prove his worth wanders from door to door without getting access to anything worthwhile. The benefits of *Deeksha* from *Guru* are obtained on the precondition of their utilization for higher goals. None has ever succeeded in getting extraordinary benefits for narrow selfish interests in return of easy flattery. The sooner this plain truth is understood, the better it would be for the true seeker.

The extraordinary powers that were bestowed upon Pt Shriram Sharma Acharya by his divine *Guru* were also given on the pre-condition of their utilization for higher goals. Acharya Shriram Sharma kept his promise in letter and spirit. He time and again proved his merit and worthiness by passing one acid

test after another. The more he proved his worthiness, the greater the extraordinary powers he received from his master. Vivekanand, Dayanand, Shivaji and Chandragupta too, had desired and received extraordinary powers from their *Guru* for higher objectives. But before acquiring them, each of them had to prove that he was a deserving candidate. This is the same as for acquiring higher qualifications one has to prove one's worth in an entrance examination. Before earning trophy in a wrestling competition, the winner needs to demonstrate his skill, and fight and win against all competitors.

Necessity of Disciple's Dedication:

One must not commit the folly of falsely promising to do something for the *Guru* in return for his grace or worldly favors. Only mean persons think of enticing and cheating others. In the realm of spirituality, sincerity and honesty have supreme significance. Here there is absolutely no scope for gains without efforts. Whoever has received boons had to first follow strict spiritual discipline of devout commitment and arduously prove his worthiness.

The principle of 'first give and then take', which Pt. Shriram Sharma had followed in his spiritual interactions with his divine master, is also a lesson to each aspirant who wishes to be the former's disciple. Whatever Pt Shriram Sharma possessed, all his physical resources and personal faculties were dedicated by him willfully and sincerely for philanthropic ventures, in accordance with the desire and necessities expressed by his sublime *Guru*. Pt. Shriram Sharma had also followed a routine of extreme austerity and asceticism throughout his life at the instance of his divine master (*Guru*). This is how he established his merit, his worthiness, in return for which his divine master

handed over to him the entire storehouse of his own superpowers and made this noble disciple (Pt. Shriram Sharma) superbly competent.

If one is not serious, this method does not matter. For those who are sincere, the endeavor for accepting a *Guru* is invariably related to the commitment to accomplish the righteous goals as instructed by the *Guru*. Only for that, one may expect Guru's grace and blessings. All wise disciples have done that.

THE CONCEPT AND RITUAL OF DEEKSHA (INITIATION)



HERE are three successively higher stages of conferment of *Deeksha*: *Mantra Deeksha*, *Pran Deeksha* and *Agni Deeksha*. *Mantra*

Deeksha is the primary stage in which the disciple is admitted to the school of Guru's spiritual ideology. Here one takes a pledge to act according to prescribed directions with unflinching faith, dedication and perseverance. The student learns the correct rendition of *Mantras* and is introduced to the methods of performing basic rituals that need to be followed in daily routine. In this stage the objective is merely to make the disciple learn how one must adhere to strict disciplines of spirituality. This is an initial training, which is helpful in giving a first impetus to advanced *sadhana*. In a way it is like an introductory guided course for training, and learning certain ascetic disciplines. However, even in this stage there is a prescribed procedure of several rituals and regular meditative chanting of the *mantra*, which establishes a link between the disciple and the *Guru*. This stage is that of acquaintance, both do not shoulder any specific responsibility of the other.

Next comes the stage of *Pran Deeksha*, which is comparable to middle school education after the primary. Now, in order to

increase the strength and competence of the disciple, the *Guru* bestows a part of his self-earned *tap*, virtues and vital spiritual energy. The disciple on the other hand, takes some pledges, gives assurances and acts according to them perseveringly. This interaction of mutual responsibility is continued throughout life. This interrelationship is analogous to that between a child and its parents, which is based on mutual faith and affection, and shared responsibilities. It is like growing a new plant by the process of grafting.

Guru carves out a part of his own consciousness and grafts it in his disciple, and the latter nurses it lovingly through sustained efforts and makes it grow. It is well-known that grafting results in improvement of quality. The process of *Pran Pratyavartan* (transference of vital spiritual power) in the domain of mental and energy body is similar to blood transfusion or grafting of organs in the physical body. In either case what is transferred becomes an integral part of the other, making the receiver much stronger and more competent. The effects of *Pran Deeksha* are well exemplified in the past; as in the case of *Guru* and disciple pairs of Vishwamitra-Harishchandra, Samarth Ramdas-Shivaji & Chanakya-Chandragupta.

The highest level of *Deeksha* is known as *Agni Deeksha* which is comparable to declaration of a crown-prince by the king during his life time. This was the tradition followed in Sikhism for declaration of successive *Gurus*. Similar was the *deeksha* that was bestowed by Ramkrishna Paramhans upon Vivekanand. In order to acquire so high a level of trustworthiness, to deserve such beatifying grace of the *Guru*, the disciple has to strive considerably. The subject is too complex and intricate, and so is beyond the scope of this book and not discussed here.

As discussed earlier, what the *Guru* bestows during a *deeksha* would be effective in the disciple according to the latter's merit, deservingness and dedication. The process of *deeksha* is incomplete

without *Guru-Dakshina* given by the disciple in return. A true guru does not require any materialistic gifts or resources for himself. He has no worldly needs or desires. *Guru-Dakshina* should be worth the noble purpose of *deeksha*. It is rendered in the form of the disciple's *shraddha* and absolute trust in the *Guru*, and his sincerity and sacrifice to fulfill the duties assigned by the noble *Guru*. Devout observance of the disciplines, uprooting of vices, shortcomings and adoption of good qualities and *sadhana* as guided by the *Guru*, and devotion of time, talents and other potentials and resources for promotion of high ideals and altruistic service of the society, would, for example be the least a disciple could offer as *Guru-dakshina* in the present times.

An Opportunity for the Seekers:

Millions of people, who have been blessed through *deeksha* by noble guru Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya and are found to be so empowered, protected, happy, successful, and benevolent by dedicated *Gayatri Sadhana* today, that the paeans sung in the scriptures in the praise of *Gayatri* appear evident in their lives. As a part of *Guru-dakshina* they are working whole-heartedly under the auspices of "All World Gayatri Pariwar", along with sincere fulfillment of their worldly duties, for constructive transformation of mankind for a bright future of the world.

The aspirants of *Gayatri Mantra-Deeksha*, or those who seek enlightenment through *Gayatri Sadhana*, and those who have further questions on the *Gayatri Mantra*, or queries with regard to spiritual progress, may contact the fraternity of "All World Gayatri Pariwar" at Shantikunj, Hardwar, or any of its branches distributed across India and abroad (www.awgp.org).

